



Margaret Murdoch and John Adamson



Margaret Murdoch Adamson was called Maggie by her family and friends. She was the sixth and youngest child of William Murdoch and Janet Lennox. Her father, William, was the youngest child of James Murdoch and Mary Murray. Maggie was born August 27, 1858, in Ponesk, Ayr, Scotland. She joined the Mormon Church October 8, 1877, just two months before the death of her invalid mother.

Her mother, Janet Lennox Murdoch, had a crippling disease, which must have been arthritis. She was confined to a wheelchair for many years before her death. Her children thought she was a very stern, demanding woman. She was very particular about the cleanliness of her person, her clothing, and her home. Her meals had to be served on a highly polished tray covered with a fresh linen napkin and laid with her best china and silverware. She required her girls to iron the linens with neat, square corners and with no sign of a wrinkle. This must have been one of her ways of teaching her daughters how to keep house after she was unable to do it herself.

Maggie's father, William Murdoch, was a kind and gentle man. He was very patient with his invalid wife and his young daughters, who were always striving to please their mother in carrying out their many household responsibilities. Many of William's descendants have inherited his kindly, twinkling, smiling eyes, that seemed to close completely when he laughed.

Maggie was nineteen years old when her mother died shortly before Christmas in 1877. Soon after the death of her mother, William and the remaining members of the family decided to migrate to America. James, the oldest son, was already in America. He had written them about the opportunities to be found there. It had long been the wish of their mother that they join the Mormon Church and go to Utah. The Church at that time encouraged new members to migrate to Utah. They began to make preparations to go.

By May of 1878 they were ready to leave Scotland. Their immediate party consisted of William; his sister, Veronica Caldow; his son David L.; David's new wife, Elizabeth Thyne; daughters Janet (Jennie) and Margaret (Maggie); and John Adamson, to whom Maggie was betrothed. They joined the company of Mormon emigrants in Liverpool and sailed for America May 24, 1878 on the S.S. Nevada. David L. in his journal wrote that Jennie and Maggie were seasick for the first three days at sea. However, they were able to get out of bed on the fourth day. Then David L. became sick. He and Lizzie traveled first class. It was their honeymoon trip.

The others had steerage accommodations. They had to prepare their own food and wash their own dishes without the benefit of hot water.

The crossing took twelve days. They arrived in New York June 5. When their ship docked in New York Harbor, James "D" was there to meet them. He was working in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania at that time. They engaged rooms at the Steven's Hotel on Broadway, did a little sightseeing, then went to Castle Garden to see a show that night. The next day they went to "Jersey" to catch the west-bound train. James "D" rode with them as far as Pittsburgh, where they changed cars. Here the English and Scottish companies were separated by two cars of "bad smelling" Russians. Next morning the Russian cars were moved to the end of the train. At every large stop, crowds of curious people pushed their way through the train to look at the immigrants.

They changed trains in Chicago and again in Omaha. The new accommodations at Omaha were on the Union Pacific. The cars were very dirty. All baggage was loaded tightly into three baggage cars. There were twelve passenger cars. Besides the nine cars for Utah, there were three for California. The most tiresome part of their journey was from Omaha to Salt Lake City in those dirty cars. They arrived in Salt Lake at 9 p.m. on Thursday, June 13, 1878, twenty days from Liverpool, and only seven days from New York City.

When William's party arrived in Salt Lake City, there was no one at the station to meet them. They had arrived two days earlier than they were expected. So they stayed overnight at a nearby hotel called "Valley House." Early the next morning William went back to the train station where he found his brother, John, with teams and wagons enough to transport them and all their luggage to Heber City. That trip took one long day.

A short time after their arrival in Heber, they rented a small one-room house from Thomas Giles. All seven of them lived in that little house until David L. and Lizzie were able to find a house for themselves. That still left five adults living in one small room. Inasmuch as it was the summer season, they very likely made good use of the front porch and the lawn for sleeping as well as eating areas.

William soon obtained land four miles up Lake Creek. John Adamson helped him build a house, a stable, sheds, and fences. Some of the land had to be cleared, and irrigation ditches had to be dug. They helped to dig the irrigation ditch to all the farmers who lived below them, while some of the men dug only till the ditch reached their individual property. William was fifty-eight years old at this time; John was twenty-eight.

John Adamson was born in Muirkirk, Ayr, Scotland.

He was born May 22, 1849. He was nine years old when Maggie was born. She must have known him all her life. She was born nearly two years after Wee Granny died. Wee Granny was paternal grandmother. John was the eighth child of ten children. His father was Robert Adamson



(1807-1863). His mother was Margaret Millar Murdoch. John was fourteen when his father died. He worked for farmers who lived nearby. Later he went to work in a coal mine. He apparently received a good schooling, as he had nice penmanship, was quick and accurate with figures, and read considerably as an adult. He was gifted in music, and may have had some training in that line.

Just recently we have received a copy of a letter written to John Adamson by Janet Lennox Murdoch, Maggie's mother, advising him of the arrival of a guest in her home and inviting him to call on them the following day. We know that John's mother was bitterly opposed to the Mormons and had forbidden John to meet with them. We think that Mr. Macfarlane, who is mentioned in the letter, was a Mormon missionary, and that Maggie's mother was being very cautious about letting John know that a missionary had arrived and a cottage meeting was planned at her home.

*Hilmarook*  
*Friday night.*

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*Dear Mr. Adamson,*

*I write to inform  
you that Mr. Macfarlane  
arrived here this evening  
about ten o'clock.*

*if it will suit you  
come in tomorrow  
afternoon.*

*I remain  
yours sincerely  
Janet G. Murdoch*

John Adamson joined the Mormon Church on April 28, 1878, against the wishes of his widowed mother, whereupon she immediately disowned him. As soon as John got a job in America, he began to send money to her. This seemed to appease her displeasure to some extent.

John and Maggie were married on January 16, 1879, in the old Endowment House, in Salt Lake City, seven months after their arrival in America. They continued living with Maggie's father for some time, helping him to get well established with his farming. Then they moved into town. Four children were born to them in Heber, three boys and one girl: John Robert (Bert), William Lennox (Leck), Isabelle, and James Murray (Jim).

In 1890, John went to work in Park City as engineer for the Daly Mine. He moved his family to Park City, where life was considerably different than it had been in the farming community of Heber. There were no big yards or wide meadows where the children could run and play, no cows to milk, no eggs to gather, no horses to ride. The boys missed their grandfather's horses more than anything else.

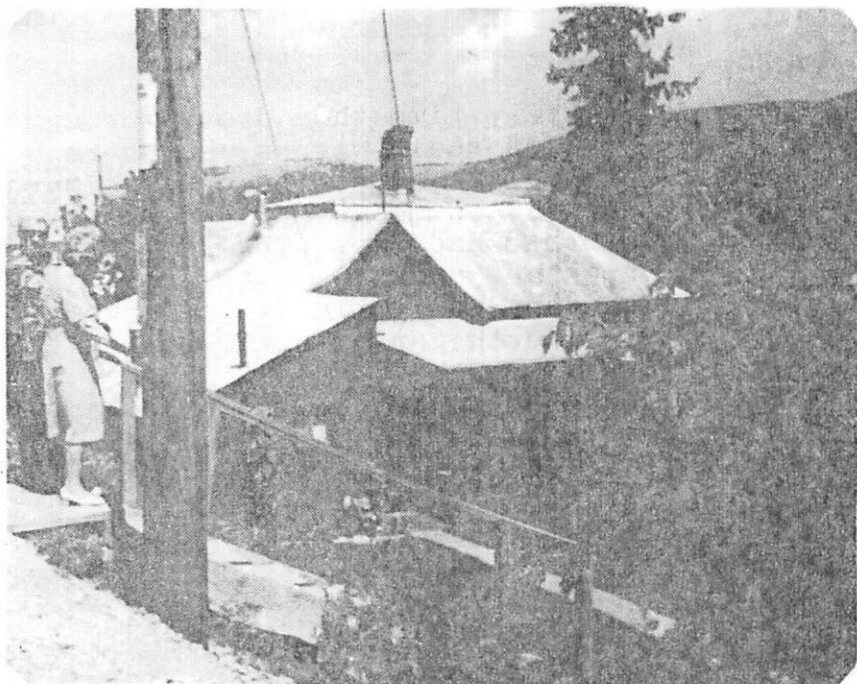
The Adamson home was built on a steep hillside, as were most homes in Park City at that time. The small doorway slanted down the hill at very nearly a forty-five degree angle. Adjacent to their small yard was a long wooden stairway that gave them access to the street above and the street below their house. A new red brick schoolhouse was not far away on the street below. The schoolyard added to their play area. They had a male teacher who disciplined his pupils with a ruler on their knuckles and a leather strap across their backs when he caught the one responsible for the outlandish tricks they played.

Brother Thomas L. Allen was the presiding elder in charge of the LDS branch of the Church in Park City at that time. He came from Coalville every weekend to conduct church meetings. John Adamson and George Curtis were his counselors. Brother Allen always stayed overnight, so John built an extra room on his house to accommodate Brother Allen. To this day when we grandchildren go to Park City, we drive past that old house and point out Brother Allen's room to our grandchildren. We take pictures and walk up and down that long flight of stairs. The old house is still in fairly good condition and is still occupied, ninety years later. Its present address is 206 Woodside Street. (See picture on next page.)

Two more children were born to the Adamsons while they lived in Park City, David Edwin, who was called Dick, and Edith Mary, who was later called Edu (pronounced Ee-doo) which was begun by a small niece and nephew who could not say her name.

In 1897 the mines in Park City stopped operating because of an economic depression. So John Adamson was out of work. He and Maggie had long been aware of the fact that their boys would soon be old enough to work in the mines if they remained in Park City. This seemed to be a good time to get the boys away from that possibility. William (Billy)





The Adamson  
home in  
Park City

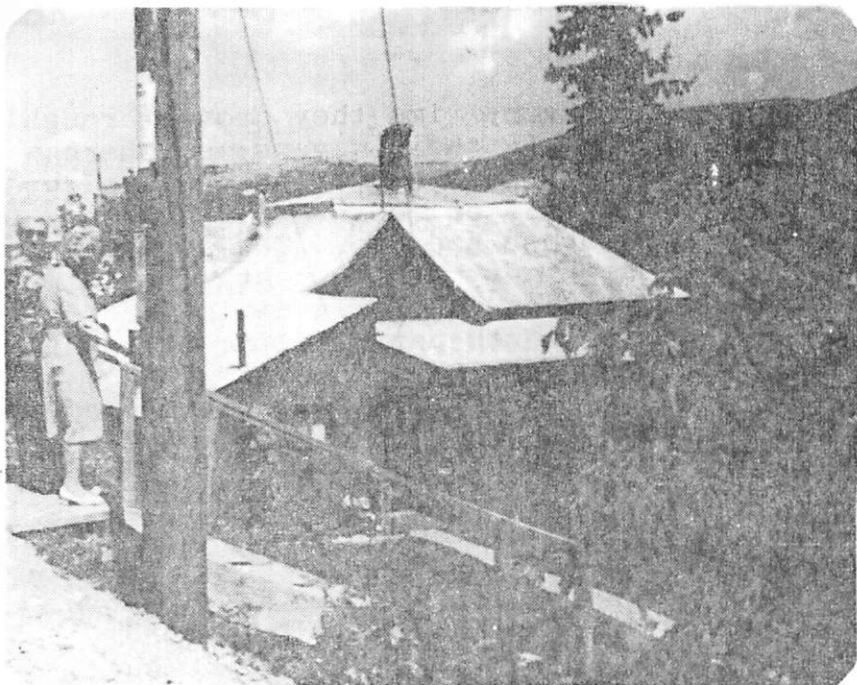
Baird, who had married Maggie's sister Jennie, wanted some land with more irrigation water than he could get in Heber where they were living; so he was ready for a move, too.

After much investigation, consideration, and advice, and with some financial assistance from Maggie's and Jennie's brother James "D", John and Billy Baird bought the Hot Springs Ranch in Carey, Idaho. John was now nearly forty-nine years old; Maggie was forty. Their oldest child, Bert, was eighteen, their youngest, Edith, was five. The Bairds had eight children, approximately the same age as the Adamson children.

It was April of 1898 when they left Utah. In addition to their personal belongings and household furnishings, each family took tools, farming equipment, a farm wagon, a two-seated buggy, a team of horses, a saddle horse, a saddle, harness for the team, and innumerable other items. The horses became family pets. The Adamson's team, "Dick and Milly," and the saddle horse, "Penny," were remembered and talked about by the Adamson children all the rest of their lives.

The trip to Idaho was made by train. Their belongings were loaded into two freight cars. The men rode in the one carrying the horses. The women and children had seats in a passenger car. At Shoshone, Idaho, the freight cars were switched to the branchline that ran to Ketchum, Idaho, via Hailey. The family members changed trains, and the journey continued to a small loading station called Tikura. There the freight cars were left on a siding, the horses were unloaded, the wagons were assembled, and the two families with their belongings were hauled to their new homes on the Hot Springs Ranch, a distance of fifteen miles. They made many trips over a period of several days before the freight cars were emptied.

Little Wood River, which runs through Carey Valley, split into two channels at that time, both of which crossed the main road through town. There were no bridges across those streams. It was spring and the water was high. Both



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streams had to be forded. Every time they drove through the streams, the water flooded into their wagons, so there was much drying-out to be done of both clothing and furniture. There were two log houses with sod roofs on the ranch. One house had four rooms; the other had two. The Adamsons got the four-room house because they had the most furniture (and because Jennie insisted.) John and Billy divided the property; the Adamsons took the north part and the Bairds took the south. The present road was the dividing line.

Immediately upon arrival the children explored their surroundings. There was not a tree in sight. Several hot springs bubbled out of the ground near one of the houses. The largest one made a deep pool with the others running into it. All of them seemed to be filled with moss that grew on the bottom, up the sides, and in a thick layer all around the edges. A stream of hot water ran from the big pool through a rather deep ditch three or four feet wide. The ditch went across the yard, down a gentle slope, and emptied into a nearby lake surrounded by a forest of cattails. Dick, who was seven years old, tried to jump the ditch, and fell into the hot water. Luckily he was not burned, but the incident was the beginning of his dislike of his new home. He would not drink the water from the hot springs, even after it had been cooled. He made himself and everyone else miserable by constantly demanding a drink of cold water. The nearest cold water came from a spring a quarter of a mile away. So drinking water had to be hauled from that spring.

The old Oregon Trail lay at the foot of the hills, less than a mile to the north of their home. The six-horse teams pulling the big freight wagons raised continuous clouds of dust all that summer. The children counted as many as one hundred wagons that passed each day.

John soon acquired some adjoining land through the U.S. government's Homestead Act, and began to develop it. Much of the Hot Springs property was for cattle grazing and raising wild hay. The new land gave room for other crops. It was also closer to the cold-water springs. John built a new house and moved his family out of the sod-roofed log house.

The years they lived on the ranch must have been difficult for Maggie Adamson. She was afraid of horses, and disliked the long ride to church each Sunday in the white-topped two-seated buggy. Teams of horses were easily spooked in those days, and would often run away, sometimes causing the buggy or wagon they were pulling to tip over. Maggie preferred riding in the small one-seated buggy with her son, Lennox, doing the driving. She thought he handled the horses better than John or the other boys.

Another disturbing thing for Maggie was the fact that the Indians would often come to the area to dig camas roots. She was distrustful of them, although they were not as threatening as the ones who had bothered them in Utah. It was still a worry having them so near.



Then only five months after their arrival in Idaho, her sister, Jennie, died from complications of childbirth. The premature baby girl was given to Maggie, who spent day and night trying to keep it alive. The baby lived for one month. These weren't the only deaths in the Baird family. Less than three years after Jennie's death her second daughter, Elizabeth, who was fourteen, died. This left Jessie, the only other girl in the Baird family, to keep house for her father and six brothers.

Wild hay grew profusely on the ranch. It was harvested and stacked for winter feeding. Meadow grass grew thick and tall adjacent to the fields of wild hay. One day a fire sprang up suddenly in the dry grass. It spread so quickly that Maggie and the younger children ran to the nearest hill for safety. The men and older boys fought the fire. They saved the houses, the barns, and the livestock, but lost all the hay and grass and some of the sheds.

The following winter was a hard one. They had to buy feed for their animals. Money was scarce and food was scarce. Maggie was grateful for their milk cows and their chickens; also for the wild sage hens that were their main source of meat for some time. There were no near neighbors; no other women to visit or to give help if needed.

In 1902, possibly to make life easier for Maggie, John arranged to sell his share of the ranch to Billy. He bought a house and some land in town; then, in partnership with several other men, bought the only general store in the valley. They erected a new building with an adjoining office area that was used as the post office. They named the store Blaine Co-op.



Post Office and Co-op in 1906. Men in front of store are: William F. Rawson, Lennox Adamson, Bert Adamson, D. H. Hollingsworth, Cyrus J. Stanford, Edward Davis, and John Adamson.

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to keep their boys from playing pool at the pool hall, Maggie and John bought a pool table and installed it in their parlor. It filled up the entire room, so the sofa and most of the easy chairs were moved into their dining room, which became the family room in the Adamson home. This attraction made the Adamson home very popular with the young people. Maggie could always supply them with good food, and occasionally John would treat them to a glass of his home-made root beer.

A favorite pastime of the Adamson family was camping and fishing. There were beautiful camping areas nearby, and fishing was always good. An overnight fishing trip was a delightful experience, and became a favorite way to entertain visitors.

Their sons went on missions. When they returned, they married and moved into nearby homes of their own. With the help of his sons, John built a tall water tank. He connected a gasoline engine to the well pump, which then pumped water into the tank, thus supplying running water to his home and the homes of the married sons.

Ever since the death of his mother, in October of 1886, John had nurtured a desire to return to Scotland to see the remaining members of his family. He had two brothers who were still living there. He wanted to teach them the gospel. On May 28, 1910, he left for a mission to Scotland. His brothers were glad to see him and gave him a joyful welcome, but they did not join the Church as he had hoped. They both died, about a year apart, while John was still in Scotland. He was able to attend both funeral services.

During John's absence, Maggie supported herself by taking the lady schoolteachers into her home to room and board. The family dance band assisted financially toward their father's missionary expenses.

After returning from his mission, John and Maggie went to Salt Lake, where they spent the winter doing temple work for deceased members of John's family. He had collected the names and dates needed for this work while he was in Scotland.

Both John and Maggie Adamson died in 1915. They were loved and admired by all who knew them. They had always been industrious, hard-working people. They were remembered for their faithfulness to the Church, their kindness to friends and neighbors, their good humor in spite of many trials and tribulations, and their honesty in all their dealings. Their children were all honorable citizens and good Church members with strong testimonies of the truthfulness of the gospel, for which their father gave up his birthright.

None of their six children are living now. At present count there are 174 direct descendants, including 18 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren, 99 great-great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-great-grandchildren.

--Compiled by Lexie C. Sutton,  
granddaughter of John Adamson and  
Margaret Murdoch.





John Adamson home in Carey, Idaho



Margaret Murdoch Adamson & John Adamson about  
1914